CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1   1.   A system comprising:

2   a plurality of electronic devices, wherein selected ones of the electronic

3   devices include a physical-tag and a logical-tag, wherein the physical-tag includes a

4   physical-tag identifier, and wherein the logical-tag includes logical attribute

5   information;

6   at least one physical-tag reading device, which is operable to read the

7   physical-tag identifier from the physical-tag over an air interface;

8   at least one logical-tag reading device, which is operable to cause a software

9   agent to read the logical attribute information from the logical-tag; and

10   a processing element, which is operable to associate the physical-tag

11   identifier with the logical attribute information.

1   2.   The system of claim 1, further comprising:

2   an asset manager, which is operable to store a plurality of tracking records,

3   wherein a tracking record for a selected electronic device includes the physical-tag

4   identifier and at least a portion of the logical attribute information.

1   3.   The system of claim 2, wherein the tracking record includes information

2   selected from a group of information types that includes a logical-tag identifier, the

3   physical-tag identifier, a device type, a device owner identifier, a hardware

4   configuration description, a software configuration description, an Internet protocol

5   address, a user identifier, and device location information.

1   4.   An apparatus comprising:

2   a logical-tag, which includes

3   an information storage medium, which is operable to store logical

4   attribute information that includes a configuration description for an

5   electronic device, and

6   a software agent, which is operable to retrieve the logical attribute

7   information from the information storage medium in response to an

8   information request from a requester, and to send the logical attribute

9   information to the requester.

1   5.   The apparatus of claim 4, further comprising:

2   a physical-tag, which includes a physical-tag identifier that can be used to

3   access the logical attribute information.

1   6.   The apparatus of claim 5, wherein the physical-tag includes a radio-

2   frequency identification tag, which is operable to store the physical-tag identifier

3   using a storage medium that is readable by a physical-tag reading device using a

4   radio-frequency signal.

1   7.   The apparatus of claim 5, wherein the physical-tag includes an identification

2   tag, which visually indicates the physical-tag identifier using a medium that is

3   readable using a physical-tag reading device that includes an optical scanner.

1   8.   The apparatus of claim 4, wherein the information storage medium is

2   operable to store logical attribute information selected from a group of information

3   types that includes a logical-tag identifier, the physical-tag identifier, a device type,

4   a device owner identifier, a hardware configuration description, a software

5   configuration description, an Internet protocol address, a user identifier, and device

6   location information..

1   9.   An apparatus comprising:

2   a processor, which is operable to create an information request to request

3   logical attribute information that is stored by a logical-tag of a remote electronic

4   device, wherein the logical attribute information includes a configuration

5   description for the remote electronic device; and

6   an interface, operably coupled to the processor, which is operable to send the

7   information request to the remote electronic device and to receive the logical

8   attribute information from the remote electronic device.

1   10.   The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the processor is further operable to

2   associate the logical attribute information with a physical-tag identifier, wherein the

3   physical-tag identifier includes a physical-tag identifier associated with the remote

4   electronic device.

1   11.   The apparatus of claim 9, further comprising:

2   an asset manager, which is operable to store a tracking record for the remote

3   electronic device, which includes the physical-tag identifier and at least a portion of

4   the logical attribute information.

1   12.   The apparatus of claim 9, further comprising:

2   a display device, which is operable to display at least a portion of the logical

3   attribute information, wherein the logical attribute information includes information

4   selected from a group of information types that includes a logical-tag identifier, the

5   physical-tag identifier, a device type, a device owner identifier, a hardware

6   configuration description, a software configuration description, an internet protocol

7   address, a user identifier, and device location information.

1   13.   An apparatus comprising:

2   an information storage medium, which is operable to store logical attribute

3   information that includes a configuration description for an electronic device with

4   which the apparatus is associated; and

5   a software agent, which is operable to retrieve the logical attribute

6 information from the information storage medium in response to an information

7 request from a requester, and to send the logical attribute information to the

8 requester.

1   14.   The apparatus of claim 13, further comprising:

2   a processor, which is operable to execute the software agent and to access

3 the logical attribute information within the information storage medium.

1   15.   The apparatus of claim 13, further comprising:

2   a processor, which is operable to determine the logical attribute information

3 and store the logical attribute information within the information storage medium.

1   16.   An apparatus comprising:

2   a physical-tag reading device, which is operable to read, over an air

3 interface, a physical-tag identifier indicated by a physical-tag associated with an

4 electronic device; and

5   a processor, operably coupled to the physical-tag reading device, which is

6 operable to associate the physical-tag identifier with logical attribute information

7 that includes a configuration description for the electronic device.

1   17.   The apparatus of claim 16, further comprising:

2   a display device, which is operable to display at least a portion of the logical

3 attribute information, wherein the logical attribute information includes information

4 selected from a group of information types that includes a logical-tag identifier, the

5 physical-tag identifier, a device type, a device owner identifier, a hardware

6 configuration description, a software configuration description, an internet protocol

7 address, a user identifier, and device location information.

1   18.   The apparatus of claim 16, further comprising:

2   a logical information retrieval device, which is operable to obtain the logical

3 attribute information.

1   19.   The apparatus of claim 18, wherein the logical information retrieval device

2   includes a logical-tag reading device that is operable to obtain the logical attribute

3   information from the electronic device over a wireless link.

1   20.   The apparatus of claim 18, wherein the logical information retrieval device

2   includes a logical-tag reading device that is operable to obtain the logical attribute

3   information from the electronic device over a network connection.

1   21.   The apparatus of claim 18, wherein the logical information retrieval device

2   includes an interface that is operable to obtain the logical attribute information from

3   a database.

1   22.   The apparatus of claim 16, wherein the physical-tag reading device is further

2   operable to obtain the logical attribute information from the physical-tag.

1   23.   The apparatus of claim 16, wherein the physical-tag reading device is further

2   operable to write the logical attribute information to the physical-tag.

1   24.   An apparatus comprising:

2   a physical-tag reading device, which is operable to read, over an air

3   interface, a physical-tag identifier indicated by a physical-tag associated with an

4   electronic device; and

5   a communication interface that is operable to provide the physical-tag

6   identifier to a remote processing element, which associates the physical-tag

7   identifier with logical attribute information that includes a configuration description

8   for the electronic device.

1   25.   The apparatus of claim 24, wherein the communication interface is further

2   operable to provide information that enables the remote processing element to

3   identify a location of the device.

1   26.   The apparatus of claim 24, wherein the apparatus further comprises a storage

2   medium operable to store the physical-tag identifier.

1   27.   The apparatus of claim 24, wherein the communication interface is a

2   wireless interface.

1   28.   The apparatus of claim 24, wherein the communication interface is a

2   network interface.

1   29.   An apparatus comprising:

2   a processor, operable to receive logical attribute information that includes a

3   configuration description for a remote electronic device, and to receive a physical-

4   tag identifier indicated by a physical-tag associated with the remote electronic

5   device, and to store, within a database, the logical attribute information and the

6   physical-tag identifier in association with each other; and

7   the database, operably connected to the processor, and which is capable of

8   storing a plurality of tracking records, wherein a first tracking record includes the

9   logical attribute information and the physical-tag identifier for the remote electronic

10   device, and wherein other tracking records include logical attribute information and

11   physical-tag identifiers for other remote electronic devices.

1   30.   The apparatus of claim 29, further comprising:

2   an interface, operably coupled to the processor, which receives the physical-

3   tag identifier from a physical-tag reading device.

1   31.   The apparatus of claim 29, further comprising:

2   an interface, operably coupled to the processor, which receives the logical

3   attribute information from the remote electronic device.

1   32.   A method comprising:

2   creating a tracking record for a remote electronic device, wherein the

3   tracking record includes a physical-tag identifier and tracking information, wherein

4   the physical-tag identifier includes a value indicated by a physical-tag associated

5   with the device, and wherein the tracking information includes logical attribute

6   information stored by a logical-tag associated with the device; and

7   updating the tracking record when updated tracking information is received.

1   33.   The method of claim 32, further comprising:

2   updating device location information within the tracking record, wherein the

3   device location information is determined from information received from one or

4   more physical-tag reading devices.

1   34.   The method of claim 32, further comprising:

2   sending a request to the remote electronic device for current logical attribute

3   information;

4   receiving a response from the remote electronic device with the current

5   logical attribute information; and

6   updating the tracking record with the current logical attribute information.

1   35.   The method of claim 32, further comprising:

2   receiving, from a physical-tag reading device, a request for at least a portion

3   of the tracking information; and

4   returning the at least a portion of the tracking information to the physical-tag

5   reading device.

1   36.   The method of claim 35, further comprising:

2   verifying that the tag reading device has permission to access the at least a

3   portion of the tracking information before sending the at least a portion of the

4   tracking information.

1   37.   A method comprising:

2   associating a physical-tag with an electronic device, wherein the physical-tag

3   includes a physical-tag identifier that is readable over an air interface;

4   associating a logical-tag with the electronic device, wherein the logical-tag

5   includes logical attribute information that includes a configuration description for

6   the electronic device;

7   updating the logical attribute information by the logical-tag;

8   receiving a request for at least part of the logical attribute information from a

9   remote requester having information regarding the physical-tag; and

10   sending the logical attribute information to the remote requester in response

11   to the request.

1   38.   The method of claim 37, wherein updating the logical attribute information

2   comprises:

3   identifying system hardware and software configurations;

4   updating corresponding fields within the logical attribute information; and

5   updating a timestamp, which indicates when the corresponding fields were

6   updated.

1   39.   The method of claim 37, wherein updating the logical attribute information

2   comprises:

3   receiving new logical attribute information from a remote source;

4   updating corresponding fields within the logical attribute information; and

5   updating a timestamp, which indicates when the corresponding fields were

6   updated.

1   40.   A method comprising:

2   a physical-tag reading device reading, over an air interface, a physical-tag

3   identifier indicated by a physical-tag associated with an electronic device; and

4   retrieving logical attribute information that includes a configuration

5   description for the electronic device based on the physical-tag identifier.

1   41.   The method of claim 40, wherein reading the physical-tag identifier

2   comprises reading the physical-tag identifier using a radio-frequency signal.

1   42.   The method of claim 40, wherein reading the physical-tag identifier

2   comprises reading the physical-tag identifier using an optical scanner.

1   43.   The method of claim 40, wherein retrieving the logical attribute information

2   comprises requesting the logical attribute information from a remote database, using

3   the physical-tag identifier.

1   44.   The method of claim 40, wherein retrieving the logical attribute information

2   comprises requesting the logical attribute information from a logical-tag associated

3   with the electronic device.

1   45.   The method of claim 40, wherein retrieving the logical attribute information

2   comprises retrieving the logical attribute information from a storage medium, using

3   the physical-tag identifier.

1   46.   The method of claim 40, wherein retrieving the logical attribute information

2   comprises retrieving the logical attribute information from the physical-tag.

1   47.   The method of claim 40, further comprising the physical-tag reading device

2   writing at least a portion of the logical attribute information to the physical-tag.

1   48.   The method of claim 40, further comprising:

2   displaying at least a portion of the logical attribute information, wherein the

3   logical attribute information includes information selected from a group of

4   information types that includes a logical-tag identifier, the physical-tag identifier, a

5   device type, a device owner identifier, a hardware configuration description, a

6   software configuration description, an Internet protocol address, a user identifier,

7   and device location information.

1   49.   A method comprising:

2   a physical-tag reading device reading, over an air interface, a physical-tag

3   identifier indicated by a physical-tag associated with an electronic device; and

4   providing the physical-tag identifier to a remote processing element, which

5   associates the physical-tag identifier with logical attribute information that includes

6   a configuration description for the electronic device.

1   50.   The method of claim 49, further comprising:

2   providing information that enables the remote processing element to

3   determine a location of the physical-tag reading device.

1   51.   The method of claim 49, further comprising:

2   storing the physical-tag identifier; and

3   sending the physical-tag identifier to the remote processing element.

1   52.   A method comprising:

2   creating an information request to request logical attribute information that is

3   stored by a logical-tag of a remote electronic device, wherein the logical attribute

4   information includes a configuration description for the remote electronic device;

5   sending the information request to the remote electronic device; and

6   receiving the logical attribute information from the remote electronic device.

1   53.   The method of claim 52, further comprising:

2   associating the logical attribute information with a physical-tag identifier,

3   wherein the physical-tag identifier includes a physical-tag identifier associated with

4   the remote electronic device.

1   54.   The method of claim 53, further comprising:

2   storing a tracking record for the remote electronic device, which includes the

3   physical-tag identifier and at least a portion of the logical attribute information.

1   55.   The method of claim 52, further comprising:

2   displaying at least a portion of the logical attribute information, wherein the

3   logical attribute information includes information selected from a group of

4   information types that includes a logical-tag identifier, the physical-tag identifier, a

5   device type, a device owner identifier, a hardware configuration description, a

6   software configuration description, an Internet protocol address, a user identifier,

7   and device location information.

1   56.   A method comprising:

2   a logical-tag of an electronic device storing logical attribute information that

3   includes a configuration description for the electronic device;

4   retrieving the logical attribute information in response to an information

5   request from a requester; and

6   sending the logical attribute information to the requester.

1   57.   The method of claim 56, further comprising:

2   determining the logical attribute information in response to a trigger event.

1   58.   A computer-readable medium having program instructions stored thereon to

2   perform a method, which when executed, results in:

3   creating a tracking record for a remote electronic device, wherein the

4   tracking record includes a physical-tag identifier and tracking information, wherein

5   the physical-tag identifier includes a value indicated by a physical-tag associated

6   with the device, and wherein the tracking information includes logical attribute

7   information stored by a logical-tag associated with the device; and

8   updating the tracking record when updated tracking information is received.

1   59.   The computer-readable medium of claim 58, wherein executing the method

2   further results in:

3   updating device location information within the tracking record, wherein the

4   device location information is determined from information received from one or

5   more physical-tag reading devices.

1   60.   The computer-readable medium of claim 58, wherein executing the method

2   further results in:

3   sending a request to the remote electronic device for current logical attribute

4   information;

5   receiving a response from the remote electronic device with the current

6   logical attribute information; and

7   updating the tracking record with the current logical attribute information.